

The program of fire prevention and fire protection that we have established in Maryland has been acclaimed widely, not only in this country but in foreign countries as well. The emphasis we place in this State on the value of teaching fire prevention and fire protection has gained the attention of people in many countries. Maryland indeed proudly acclaims itself as tops in fire service training. Our State for years has been a front runner in stressing the value of adequate instruction in fire fighting.

We were not the first to initiate a program of instruction, but we did get into that field early—around 1930. The date we usually use for the beginning of our instruction service, though, is 1937-38, when the firemen's training program at the University of Maryland was placed in the College of Engineering under a full-time director. Since that time, many thousands of persons have participated in the training program. More than 3,000 firemen take part in the firemanship program every year, and, of all our Maryland fire departments, volunteer and paid, 82 per cent will have men in training in any given year.

To me, these facts are most impressive. It is most gratifying to me, as Governor of the State, to know that Maryland is concerned, and very deeply concerned, about the loss of lives and property in fires. The people of Maryland, I know, are most appreciative of the fire record fire companies have made during the past thirty years, in protecting their communities against the perils of fire.

Once again, let me say that it is a pleasure and a privilege to be with you here at this seventy-first annual convention of the Maryland State Firemen's Association. I am most grateful to your President for inviting me to come here and most appreciative of the courtesies and cordiality I have received here today. I commend all of you for the excellent work you have done in the past in fire prevention and fire protection and encourage you to continue in your endeavors to protect the lives and the properties of the people against the ravages of fires.